

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (previously amended) A method of managing a computer information database that contains computer profile data for computers, the method including the steps of:

A. determining a multiple node tree structure of groups for the computers based on primary grouping criteria and secondary grouping criteria that correspond to selected computer profile data;

B. including, in a group mapping table, one or more fields for the primary grouping criteria and one or more fields for the secondary grouping criteria, and including in those fields, in respective table records, values corresponding to the selected computer profile data that are utilized in the primary grouping and the secondary grouping criteria;

C. further including, in the respective table records, information that identifies the groups to which the computers that satisfy the primary and secondary criteria are assigned;

D. receiving, for inclusion in the database, computer profile data from a plurality of computers;

E. for the profile data from a given computer

extracting the selected profile data that are utilized in the primary groupings and the secondary groupings,

querying the group mapping table to determine if the extracted profile data correspond to the respective values that are included in the primary grouping fields and the secondary grouping fields in any of the records in the table, and

if the query results in no records, assigning the computer to a default group,

if the query results in one table record, assigning the computer to the group that is named in the record,

if the query results in multiple table records that include secondary low values, assigning the computer to the group that is named in the record that is in a first predetermined position in the order in which the records are returned, or

if the query results in multiple records and there are no corresponding secondary low values in the records, assigning the computer to the group that is named in the record that is in a second predetermined position in the order in which the records are returned; and

F. manipulating the data from the database to produce reports that summarize the attributes of the computers in the groups, with each report for a given group including therein the attributes of the computers in the groups that are on a sub-tree with the given group as its root.

2. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein one or more table records includes secondary grouping values set to NULL.

3. (previously amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the respective values associated with the primary grouping criteria are ranges and the step of determining if the extracted data correspond to the respective values further includes determining if the corresponding extracted data falls within one of the primary grouping ranges.

4. (previously amended) The method of claim 3 wherein the values associated with the secondary grouping criteria are ranges and the step of determining if the extracted data correspond to the values further includes determining if the corresponding extracted data of interest falls within one of the secondary grouping ranges.

5. (previously amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of querying further includes determining if the extracted data corresponds to the primary grouping criteria and a secondary low value of NULL or the empty string .

6. (previously amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the primary and secondary grouping criteria correspond to user-specified values of the selected computer profile data.

7. (previously amended) A method of managing a computer information database that contains computer profile data for computers, the method including the steps of:

A. determining a multiple node tree structure of groups for the computers based on primary grouping criteria that correspond to ranges of values of selected computer profile data;

B. including, in a group mapping table, fields for the ranges of values of the selected computer profile data that are the primary grouping criteria, and including in those fields, in respective table records, high and low values for the ranges of the selected computer profile data;

C. further including, in the table records, information that identifies the groups to which the computers that satisfy the primary grouping criteria are assigned;

D. receiving, for inclusion in the database, computer profile data from a plurality of computers;

E. for the profile data from a given computer

extracting the selected profile data that is utilized in the primary grouping, querying the group mapping table to determine if the extracted data fall within the ranges of values that are included in the primary grouping fields in any of the table records, and

if the query results in no records, assigning the computer to a default group,

if the query results in one table record, assigning the computer to the group that is named in the record, or

if the query results in multiple table records assigning the computer to the group that is named in the record that is in a first predetermined position in the order in which the records are returned; and

F. manipulating the data from the database to produce reports that summarize the attributes of the computers in the groups, with each report for a given group including therein the attributes of the computers in the groups that are on a sub-tree with the given group as its root.

8. (previously amended) The method of claim 7 further including the steps of

including, in the table, fields that correspond to a range of values for computer profile data that are selected as secondary grouping criteria to assign the computers to groups for profile data reporting, and including in the fields in respective table records high and low values for the secondary grouping computer profile data of interest, and for the profile data from a given computer

further extracting data that correspond to the computer profile data selected for the secondary grouping criteria,

further querying the table to determine if the further extracted data fall within the secondary grouping criteria ranges included in the table records, and

if the query results in one table record, assigning the computer to the group that is named in the record,

if the query results in multiple table records that include secondary low values, assigning the computer to the group that is named in the record that is in a second predetermined position in the order in which the records are returned,

if the query results in no records, assigning the computer to a default group, or

if the query results in multiple records and there are no corresponding secondary low values in the records, assigning the computer to the group that is named in the record that is in a third predetermined position in the order in which the records are returned.

9. (previously amended) The method of claim 8 wherein the step of querying further includes determining if the extracted data corresponds to the primary grouping criteria and a secondary low value of NULL or the empty string.

10. (previously amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the first predetermined position in the order of the records is the first record found and the second predetermined position in the order of records is the last record found.

11. (previously amended) The method of claim 8 wherein the second predetermined position in the order of the records is the first record found and the third predetermined position in the order of records is the last record found.

12. (currently amended) A method for managing a database that contains computer profile data for a plurality of computers, the method including the steps of

grouping the plurality of computers in groups that are nodes of a multiple node tree in accordance with user-specified primary grouping criteria and secondary grouping criteria that correspond to respective values of selected computer profile data;

manipulating the database computer profile data and producing to produce reports that contain summaries of attributes of the computers in a given group and in the groups in the subtree that has the given group as its root.

13. (previously added) The method of claim 12 wherein the step of grouping further includes re-grouping the plurality of computers in groups in accordance with different user-specified primary and secondary grouping criteria.

14. (previously amended) The method of claim 12 wherein the step of grouping further includes grouping the plurality of computers in groups in accordance with primary and secondary grouping criteria that correspond to computer profile data that represents selected physical locations of users.

15. (previously amended) The method of claim 14 wherein the further step of grouping includes re-grouping the plurality of computers in groups in accordance with primary and secondary grouping criteria that correspond to computer profile data that represents selected structures within the underlying organization of users.

16. (previously amended) The method of claim 12 wherein the step of grouping further includes grouping computers in accordance with user-specified primary and secondary criteria that utilize ranges of values for the selected computer profile data.

17. (previously amended) The method of claim 16 wherein the step of grouping further includes re-grouping the plurality of computers in groups in accordance with different user-specified ranges of values of the selected computer profile data.

18. (previously added) The method of claim 16 wherein the respective ranges of values correspond to a selected structure within the underlying organization of users.

19. (previously added) The method of claim 18 wherein the further step of grouping includes re-grouping the plurality of computers in groups in accordance with primary and secondary grouping criteria that correspond to other selected structures within the underlying organization of users.

20. (previously added) A database management system for producing reports of attributes of collections of computers using computer profile data contained in a database, the system including:

A. collecting means for collecting profile data for a given computer into the database;

B. a profile group manager for

grouping the computers into a specified tree-structure of groups, based on primary and secondary grouping criteria that correspond to respective values of selected computer profile data, and

manipulating the data in the database to produce reports that summarize the attributes of the computers in the various groups.

21. (previously added) The database management system of claim 20 wherein the profile group manager

adds a group mapping table to the database, the group mapping table including a primary grouping criteria field, a secondary grouping criteria field and a group identification field with the respective table records containing primary grouping criteria and secondary grouping criteria and corresponding group information; and

includes a given computer in a group by (i) extracting from the profile data the data that corresponds to the primary grouping criteria and the secondary grouping criteria, (ii) querying the group mapping table for records that match the extracted data, and (iii) assigning a computer to a group that is specified by the group identification field in a record that is determined to match the query.